

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-10 remain pending in the application, with Claims 1 and 7 being independent. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9 and 10 have been amended herein.

Applicants note with appreciation the prior indication that Claim 6 recites allowable subject matter. This claim was presumably objected to for being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, this claim will not be rewritten in independent form at this time because its independent claim is believed to be allowable for the reasons discussed below.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,587,783 (Nakamura et al.). Claims 7-10 were rejected under § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0155949 (Masuda). Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Nakamura et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,708,011 (Nomura et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As is recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention relates to an image forming apparatus including a movable image bearing member on which an image is formed, a movable intermediate transfer member, being in contact with the image bearing member, wherein the image on the image bearing member is transferred to the intermediate transfer member, a controlling device for controlling a drive of the image bearing member

and a drive of the intermediate transfer member so as to start the drive of the image bearing member after starting the drive of the intermediate transfer member in a state that the image bearing member and the intermediate transfer member contact each other.

With the above arrangement, even if the image bearing member contacts the intermediate transfer member, occurrence of image defects caused by change in load on the intermediate transfer member can be avoided.

Nakamura et al. relates to an electrophotographic apparatus having a variable speed intermediate transfer belt. After changing the speed of the intermediate transfer belt 49 from low speed to ordinary speed, the position of the transfer belt is detected when reaching a specific speed. In particular, when position detecting sensor 56 detects a mark on the intermediate transfer belt 49, image formation starts with the image forming unit 31 at an image forming position 51. The image forming speed of the image forming unit 31bk and the moving speed of the intermediate transfer belt may be equal to each other.

Accordingly, as understood by Applicants, Nakamura et al. discloses that the image forming process starts on the image forming position at a timing of detecting a mark on the intermediate transfer belt by the position detecting sensor. Although “starting the image forming process” is disclosed, there is no explicit disclosure regarding starting the drive of the image bearing member. Accordingly, Nakamura et al. does not disclose or suggest, inter alia, controlling a drive of an image bearing member and a drive of an intermediate transfer member so as to start the drive of the image bearing member after starting the drive of the intermediate transfer member, as is recited in independent Claim 1.

Thus, Nakamura et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in independent Claim 1.

As is recited in independent Claim 7, the present invention relates to an image forming apparatus including a movable image bearing member on which an image is formed, a movable transfer material carrying member for carrying a transfer material, wherein the transfer material carrying member is in contact with the image bearing member, and the image on the image bearing member is transferred to the transfer material on the transfer material carrying member, and a controlling device for controlling a drive of the image bearing member and a drive of the transfer material carrying member so as to start the drive of the image bearing member after starting the drive of the transfer material carrying member in a state that the image bearing member and the transfer material carrying member contact each other.

With the above arrangement, even if the image bearing member contacts the transfer material carrying member, occurrence of image defects caused by a change of loading on the transfer material carrying member can be avoided.

Masuda relates to an image forming method utilizing photosensitive drums 61, with only the black drum being rotated in the black mode and the color drums being stopped. If the operation mode shifts between the color and black modes, the black drum is kept rotating (e.g., Fig. 4) or is temporarily stopped (e.g., Fig. 5). Although Masuda does describe controlling starting of rotation of the drums, there is no disclosure regarding starting of the drive of a transfer material carrying member. Accordingly, Masuda does not disclose or suggest, inter alia, controlling a drive of an image bearing member and a drive

of a transfer material carrying member so as to start the drive of the image bearing member after starting the drive of the transfer material carrying member, as is recited in independent Claim 7.

Thus, Masuda fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in independent Claim 7.

Nomura et al. has also been reviewed but is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of the citations noted above with respect to the independent claims.


Thus, independent Claims 1 and 7 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1 and 7. Dependent Claims 2-6 and 8-10 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mark A. Williamson", written over a horizontal line.

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